

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT - PY 2004

STATE: ALABAMA

DATE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

I. PURPOSE / GOAL

The purpose of the Re-employment Services (RES) Program is to improve the quality and quantity of direct re-employment services for UI claimants. RES will build on successful existing initiatives to supplement Wagner-Peyser Act allotments to increase services to UI claimants over and above regular services while targeting the funds where they are needed, and will have the most positive outcomes.

The goals of the RES Program, as stated in the PY 2004 Plan, include the following:

- 1) increasing the number of UI claimants entering employment.
- 2) increasing the number of UI claimants referred to jobs.
- 3) increasing the number of job development contacts for UI claimants.
- 4) increasing the number of UI claimants participating in Job Search Workshops.
- 5) increasing the number of job search plans for UI claimants.
- 6) reducing the duration of UI claimants receiving benefits.
- 7) reducing the rate of UI benefit exhaustion.
- 8) increasing the number of UI claimants referred to support services.
- 9) meet or exceed job seeker entered employment rate.
- 10) meet or exceed the job seeker employment retention rate.

One-half (5) of these goals were attained in PY 2004. Four (4) of these, i.e., 1) reducing the duration of UI claimants receiving benefits, 2) reducing the rate of UI benefit exhaustion, 3) meeting or exceeding the job seeker entered employment rate, and 4) meeting or exceeding the job seeker employment retention rate, however, are outcome results, not merely activity measures, thus highly indicative of direct improvement in the plight of UI claimants.

The other goal achieved was an increase in the number of UI claimants participating in Job Search Workshops. Almost one thousand more claimants participated representing a gain of 14.8%. This gain was reflective of the concerted effort through WIA contract to provide Job Shop Workshops for TAA and WARN Rapid Response clientele.

Those activity goals unmet, i.e., 1) increasing the number of UI claimants referred to jobs, 2) increasing the number of job development contacts for UI claimants, 3) increasing the number of job search plans for UI claimants, 4) increasing the number of UI claimants referred to support services, and 5) increasing the number of UI claimants entering employment appeared to reflect fewer number of UI claimants available seeking assistance. The UI claimant job seekers pool shrank by 21.2% to 127,593 in PY 04. This decline appeared linked to the state's growing economy which posted it's best employment expansion and lowest unemployment in recent years. Commensurate declines, as expected, were also posted in the five (5) goals not met.

II. ALLOCATION OF GRANT

Accomplishment of the goals of the RES program was pursued through the strategy of provision of direct services to UI claimants as quickly as possible. Therefore, the entirety of the RES grant was directed toward the allocation of seven and nine-tenths (7.9) positions distributed among twenty (20) field offices. Targeting of these offices was determined by their proportionate share of the state's UI first payments, thus demonstrating need for these services, and by their likelihood for the most positive outcomes, as determined by comparative analysis of Workforce data, i.e., employment and unemployment levels and trends.

Offices selected and their position allocations for PY 2004 were: Albertville - 0.5, Alexander City - 0.25, Anniston - 0.25, Trussville - 0.5, Birmingham - 0.5, Alabaster - 0.25, Cullman - 0.25, Decatur - 0.5, Foley - 0.25, Ft. Payne - 0.25, Gadsden - 0.5, Huntsville - 0.5, Mobile - 0.5, Montgomery - 0.5, Opelika - 0.4, Scottsboro - 0.25, Selma - 0.25, Sheffield - 1.0, Talladega - 0.25, and Tuscaloosa - 0.25.

Delivery of Re-employment Services by the Employment Service was accomplished through the state's One-Stop Career Center System. During most of PY 2004, Alabama had thirty (30) comprehensive One-Stop Centers and twenty-four (24) affiliated one-stop sites linked electronically to the Career Center System blanketing the state to provide re-employment services. While all points of service are charged with providing re-employment services to UI claimants, RES resources were concentrated in those areas identified above with the greatest need, as well as the likelihood for success.

III. UTILIZATION / COST

RES-funded positions were fully utilized during PY 2004 to provide re-employment services to UI claimants. The program year ended June 30, 2005, with 8.73 positions paid and 99.6% of all RES funds (\$541,555) expended. Virtually all costs reflect direct personal services/benefits costs or allocated positional costs associated with the 7.9 field positions funded by this grant.

IV. ACTIVITIES / OVERVIEW

Early intervention with direct job search assistance has been determined to be the most effective strategy to assist UI claimants in returning to employment in the shortest possible time. This strategy was effected through the following services:

- 1) Referral and Placement
- 2) Development of Job Search Plans
- 3) Job Development
- 4) Provision of Labor Market Information
- 5) Job Search Workshops, including orientation to the One-Stop Resource Center
- 6) Follow-up, to determine the need for further services

This strategy has been conveyed to the field via ES Memorandum stating administrative policy on Re-employment Services, and reinforced through Local Office Annual Plans directing each office to develop a written plan on the provision of re-employment services to UI claimants.

Core employment services were provided to UI claimants as appropriate in PY 2004, to include selection and referral to jobs, assessment, testing, job search planning, provision of labor market information, and job development. Selection and referral to work services for UI claimants was enhanced through amendment of administrative policy which recognized UI Claimants for priority of services, after Veterans, to include referral to job openings. This formal designation of UI claimants as a priority group recognizes the Employment Service's commitment to providing priority of services to UI claimants.

Job Search Workshop activity was intensified during PY 2004, in conjunction with a WIA initiative to serve TAA and WARN Rapid Response claimants. Job Search Workshops were expanded and made available to UI claimants through all Career Centers or affiliated locations. This intensive, cutting-edge, staff-assisted service focuses on job search, application completion, resume preparation, and interviewing skills utilizing Workshop aids such as video tapes and workbooks. Training was provided as needed to all local office Job-Shop facilitators.

"Orientation" to the Career Center Resource Room remained a vital and integral part of every workshop. Claimant awareness of the resource room and its variety of print, video, and electronic career guidance tools and materials have proven vital in the empowerment of job seekers to pursue self-directed service or require only limited staff assisted service. Internet access is available at all career centers.

Partner agencies in the Career Center System were informed and kept abreast of the RES program and services available to assist UI claimants. Claimants determined to have employment barriers impeding or precluding their return to suitable work were referred to

appropriate partner agencies in the One-Stop for more intensive services assistance. Partners in turn were also encouraged to refer qualified clients to appropriate RES-related services. Referral to intensive services and training was accomplished as indicated in the plan. All One-Stop partners have access to the profiled claimants in order to assist in their return to work.

The Employment Service, through the One-Stop Career Center system, is the primary service provider for Worker Profiling Re-employment Services (WPRS) providing services to those claimants identified by UI according to profile data. Profiled UI claimants are provided services on a timely basis with individualized service plans for their return to the work force.

IV. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PERFORMANCE GOALS

Outcomes achieved in these performance measures in PY 2004 must be judged in the context of the state's economic performance during this period. Unemployment improved dramatically in PY 04, declining from PY 03's 5.8% to 5.1%. A fuller appreciation of the improvement is revealed in the 25% drop in the jobless rate from June 2003's 6.4% to June 2005's 4.8%. Employment during this period also posted it's best gain in a number of years, expanding by 1.0% in PY 04.

Goals were attained in five (5) of the ten (10) performance standards measured for PY 2004. Four (4) of these, i.e., 1) reducing the duration of UI claimants receiving benefits, 2) reducing the rate of UI benefit exhaustion, 3) meeting or exceeding the job seeker entered employment rate, and 4) meeting or exceeding the job seeker employment retention rate are outcome results, not merely activity measures, and thus highly indicative of direct improvement in the plight of UI claimants. The other goal achieved was an increase in the number of UI claimants participating in Job Search Workshops where over 7,200 claimants were served.

Failure to attain goals in the remaining five (5) activity performance measures was linked to a decline in the number of UI claimants available and seeking assistance. The UI claimant job seekers pool shrank by 21.2% to 127,593 in PY 04, as the state's economy grew stronger posting the best employment expansion and lowest unemployment in recent years. Commensurate declines, not unexpectedly, were also posted in the five (5) goals not met, i.e., 1) number of UI claimants entering employment (-20.8%), 2) number of UI claimants referred to jobs (-21.9%), 3) number of job development contacts for UI claimants (-28.8%), 4) number of job search plans for UI claimants (-29.7%), and 5) number of UI claimants referred to support services (-26.3%).

Analysis of these goals and their performance indicators indicate that the PY 2004 RES Plan was properly targeted and helped bring about improvement to the plight of UI claimants.

Following is a summation of the outcomes/accomplishments as measured by the performance indicators of the goals stated in the PY 2004 RES Plan. The first group are indicators of outcomes, not measures of activity.

- The rate of UI benefit exhaustion declined in PY 04 from 32.9% to 30.4% marking the first improvement in this measure since PY 2000.
- The duration of UI claimants receiving benefits declined in PY 04 to 12.0 weeks, down from 12.6 weeks in PY 2003. This was the largest decline since 1998.
- The Entered Employment Rate (EER) achieved in PY 04 was 73%, which exceeds both the DOL-ETA negotiated rate of 62% and the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) rate of 58%. The EER for UI claimants was even better with 74% entering employment.
- The Employment Retention Rate (ERR) achieved in PY 04 was 86%, which exceeds both the DOL-ETA negotiated rate of 81% and the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) rate of 72%. Again the ERR for UI claimants surpassed overall performance with 88% retaining employment.
- Job Search Workshops served 7,268 UI claimants in PY 2004, an increase of almost one thousand claimants or a gain of 14.8%.

The following performance indicators are measures of activity not outcomes and are driven by the number of UI claimants seeking services.

- The number of active UI claimant job seekers available in PY 04, numbered 127,593 representing a decrease of -34,354 or 21.2%. This resulted in UI claimants' share of the applicant pool shrinking from 43.1% to 37.1%.
- Job search activities were provided for 116,204 UI claimants in PY 04, down 23.1% mirroring the drop in claimants available.
- Individuals referred to jobs numbered 66,410 in PY 04, down 18,622 or -21.9% from PY 03, again closely tracking the trend in claimants available.

Job Search Planning transactions in PY 04 numbered 130,678 for UI claimants, down 55,301 or -29.7%. The slightly higher percentage decline deviation from claimants available (-21.2%) is likely attributable to use of a transactions measure due to unavailability of data for individuals.

- Job development contacts for UI claimants numbered 1,829 in PY 04, down 740 or -28.8%, again trending the same track as claimants available.
- Entered Employment for UI claimants numbered 36,839 in PY 04 representing a decrease of 9,690 or -20.8% over the previous year and again mirroring the decline in available UI claimants.
- Referrals to support services totaled 7,466 in PY 04. This was down 26.3% from PY 03 again reflecting the fewer number of available UI claimants.

V. CONCLUSIONS / PROPOSED ACTION

While “activity” performance goals were not all attained for the RES program in PY 2004, those measures relating to “outcomes” for UI claimants were all surpassed. Activity measures, while important, are dependent upon and driven by the total pool of clients available for services. Failure to achieve these goals was felt to be more a reflection of improving economic conditions rather than the strategies implemented to achieve these goals.

Based upon the positive performance outcome results achieved this year, no major actions or changes are proposed for the delivery of Re-Employment Services (RES) in PY 2005.